

Victim Assistance in Georgia: then and now

Georgia	1	2	3	4	5	6
According to original study		•		•		•
According to LM 2002		•				•
According to LM 2003						•

Key Developments (LM 2002):

A Defense Ministry official told Landmine Monitor that Georgian Armed Forces laid antipersonnel mines in several passes in the Kodori gorge in 2001. The government has denied this. There were reports of private armed groups from Georgia laying antipersonnel mines in Abkhazia. Russia began the process of destroying its obsolete landmine stocks in Georgia. According to the ICBL Georgian Committee, in 2001 there were 98 new landmine/UXO casualties in Georgia.

Indicator 1: The extent to which information on mine victims' demographics and needs is available.

According to original study:

LM 2000 reports information from the Head of Science and Technical Research Department of Georgian Army General Staff that about 70% of casualties during the Georgia-Abkhazia war were landmine victims. The ICBL Georgia Committee anticipates an increase in mine casualties as displaced persons return to their homes in mined areas.

According to LM 2002:

In 2001, the ICBL GC collected data on 98 new casualties in Georgia caused by landmines, UXO or improvised explosive devices (IEDs): 34 people were killed including four children, and 64 people were injured including 14 children.²⁹ Casualties continue to be reported in 2002: in February, a 14-year-old boy was injured in Khashuri,³⁰ two young men died in an incident in the Sagaredgo region,³¹ and a seven-year-old boy was injured in the eye and his mother in hand in an incident in the Sachkhere region.³² The ICBL GC also reports 33 casualties from 1 January to 23 July 2002.

There are no comprehensive official statistics on the number of people killed or injured by landmines and UXO in Georgia. The Central Hospital of the Ministry of Defense registered four military mine injuries in 2001.³³ The Defense Ministry registered three mine casualties in the Pankisi gorge: one border guard was killed, one military officer was injured, and one local inhabitant of the Kodori gorge was killed.³⁴ The Head of Zugdidi Republican Hospital, the main health facility in the border region with Abkhazia, reported treating nine mine casualties in 2001.³⁵

Indicator 2: The extent to which a national disability coordination mechanism exists and recognizes mine victims.

According to original study:

No information available.

According to LM 2002:

No information available

Indicator 3: The extent to which programs and services for the medical care and rehabilitation of mine victims are available.

According to original study:

LM 2000 reports that medical and rehabilitation facilities in Georgia are of poor quality and prohibitively expensive, and that there are no psychological counseling services for mine victims. The ICRC runs two prosthetic/orthotic centres in Tbilisi and Gagra (Abkhazia). These represent the only centres where amputees can receive rehabilitation services.

According to LM 2002:

Hospitals throughout Georgia, including in Abkhazia, routinely run short of basic medical supplies due to a lack of funding. The International Committee of the Red Cross regularly provides equipment, supplies, and

medicines to surgical hospitals, including the Zugdidi Republican Hospital, the regional referral hospital, and two facilities in Darcheli and Jvari. Three referral hospitals and two front-line hospitals were also assisted in Abkhazia. In October emergency surgical assistance was provided to the Agudzera military referral hospital and several other facilities. In 2001, 14 mine/UXO casualties benefited from ICRC assistance, including three in Abkhazia.³⁶

The ICRC, in collaboration with local authorities, supports two prosthetic/orthotic centers in Tbilisi and Gagra, for the disabled, including landmine survivors. The centers are the only facilities available for physical rehabilitation in Georgia. The main activities of the centers are the delivery of services to the physically disabled and professional training for technical staff.³⁷ In 2001, physical rehabilitation services were provided for patients who were fitted with 463 prostheses; 21 percent of the fitted amputees were mine survivors.³⁸ The Centers also produced 612 orthoses, 28 wheelchairs, and 688 crutches.³⁹ All responsibilities for the running of the Gagra Center have been handed over to the Abkhaz health authorities.⁴⁰

Since May 2000, six orthopedic technicians have been undergoing training in order to reach a higher professional level in prosthetics and orthotics, equivalent to the International Society of Prosthetic and Orthopedics (ISPO) level II. Final examinations took place in May 2001 and five passed. The training course and its final diploma have been internationally recognized by ISPO.⁴¹

The government-run Social Rehabilitation Center for the Disabled in Tbilisi provides orthopedic devices to persons with disabilities. The center currently assists 10 to 13 patients a month with orthopedic appliances, however it has the capacity to assist as many as 30 a month. The center's budget has been decreasing over the last few years. The 2001 budget was only US\$4,800 (10,656 Georgian Lary).⁴² The center produces upper and lower limb prostheses, and other assistive devices. The center also operates a repair service for prosthetic devices. In 2001, 343 prosthetic devices were produced and 112 prostheses repaired at the center. There are currently 1,500 people on the waiting list for orthopedic appliances. All services at the center are free.⁴³

Indicator 4: The extent to which programs and services for the social and economic reintegration of mine victims are available

According to original study:

No information available.

According to LM 2002:

The Ministry of Labor, Health, and Social Affairs is developing a special program to establish centers for the care and rehabilitation of the disabled in Tbilisi, Kutaisi, and Batumi.⁴⁴ In 2002, the budget for the program is US\$100,000 (222,000 Georgian Lary); part of the budget, US\$25,000 (55,500 Georgian Lary), will go toward the ICRC Orthopedic Center and US\$75,000 (166,500 Georgian Lary) to the Social Rehabilitation Center for the Disabled.⁴⁵ Nevertheless, specialized medical rehabilitation and psychological support appears to remain inaccessible, or unavailable, for many mine survivors.⁴⁶

In May 2002, a representative of the UN Mine Action Service visited Georgia to discuss mine awareness and victim assistance.⁴⁷

Indicator 5: The extent to which mine victims are protected and supported by effective laws and policies.

According to original study:

LM 2000 reports that although a general law for the "Social Protection of Disabled" exists in Georgia, necessary legislation for its implementation has not been developed.

According to LM 2002:

The June 1995 Law on the Social Protection of the Disabled outlines the rights of the disabled; however, it has not been fully implemented because of the economic situation in Georgia.⁴⁸

Indicator 6: The extent to which there is a disability community advocacy network.

According to original study:

No information available.

According to LM 2002:

No information available.

Endnotes:

²⁹ The ICBL GC collects data on incidents from hospitals and media reports and records the information in a database.

³⁰ Tamar Absava, *Akhali Taoba*, 5 February 2002, p. 7.

³¹ “Two young men become the victims of explosion,” *Akhali Taoba*, 7 February 2002, p. 7.

³² “Explosive substance at home?” *Khronika*, 11-17 February 2002, p. 19.

³³ Information provided by Surgeons Department, Central Hospital of the Ministry of Defense, 30 December 2001.

³⁴ Information provided by the Ministry of Defense to ICBL Georgian Committee, February 2002.

³⁵ Fax to ICBL GC from Nona Tacidze, Director, Zugdidi Republican Hospital, 12 March 2002.

³⁶ ICRC, “ICRC Special Report, Mine Action 2001,” ICRC, Geneva, p. 34; see also *Landmine Monitor Report 2001*, p. 883.

³⁷ ICRC, “ICRC Special Report, Mine Action 2001,” Geneva, p. 34.

³⁸ ICRC Physical Rehabilitation Programmes, Annual Report 2001, accessed at www.icrc.org.

³⁹ Interview with Rainer Knoll, Head of Orthopedic Program, and Peter Schoenenberger, Ortho-prosthetist, ICRC Orthopedic Center, Tbilisi, 8 January 2002.

⁴⁰ ICRC, “ICRC Special Report, Mine Action 2001,” Geneva, p. 34.

⁴¹ ICRC Georgia, “Even Wars Have Limits,” January 2002.

⁴² Interview with Archil Shavdia, General Director, Social Rehabilitation Center for the Disabled, 4 January 2002.

⁴³ Interview with Ramini Kravelishvili, Director, Social Rehabilitation Center for the Disabled, 8 January 2002.

⁴⁴ See *Landmine Monitor Report 2001*, pp. 883-884.

⁴⁵ Interview with Marina Gudushauri, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Labor, Health and Social Affairs, 7 February 2002.

⁴⁶ See *Landmine Monitor Report 2000*, p. 826.

⁴⁷ Email from Alexander Russetsky, ICBL GC, 27 May 2002.

⁴⁸ Letter to ICBL GC from Marina Gudusauri, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Labor, Health and Social Affairs, Ref. 17/06-134, 23 April 2001.